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PASCO SANITARY LANDFILL

The Pasco Sanitary Landfill covers 250 acres and is located 1.5 miles northeast of Pasco, Washington in an area dominated by irrigated agricultural fields and range land. The landfill is privately owned and operated and was converted from a waste burning dump to sanitary landfill in 1971. In 1972, Resource Recovery Corporation leased a portion of the landfill and operated a regional hazardous waste disposal site under a Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) permit until December 1974 when the lease terminated.

Over 47,000 drums of various hazardous substances were deposited in the leased portions of the landfill and covered by three feet of soil. Wastes known to be deposited include chlor-alkali sludge, paints, resins, herbicide manufacturing wastes, caustics, and empty pesticide containers.

In a 1985 site inspection by EPA, tetrachloroethylene (32 ppb) and trichloroethylene (480 ppb) were detected in monitoring wells on site. When sampled in 1986 by EPA, low-level organics contamination was detected in three domestic wells downgradient of the landfill. Further investigation by EPA in 1987 revealed that levels of tetrachloroethylene had increased to 72 ppb in an on-site monitoring well and trichloroethylene had increased to 1900 ppb, also in an on-site monitoring well. Low-level organics contamination was detected in only one domestic well downgradient at levels much lower than drinking water standards. Highly variable levels of inorganics had been detected in the 1985, 1986, and 1987 on-site groundwater samples. The variability has been attributed to siltation, different sampling techniques, and a highly channelized groundwater flow beneath the landfill.

The Pasco Sanitary Landfill poses potential risks to the environment and public health. There is a drinking water well on site which supplies water to two nearby residences. Low level organics contamination has been detected in nearby drinking water wells, although it is not clear at this time whether this contamination can be directly attributed to the landfill. Groundwater is used by over 1,000 people within three miles for drinking and is also used to irrigate almost 10,000 acres of land.

The landfill is currently operating under an Ecology permit and is under an Ecology administrative order to conduct a quarterly groundwater monitoring program using on-site monitoring wells. In addition, the landfill had been proposed for expansion.